



## **News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CALIFORNIA RECEIVES AN 'A' FOR FIGHTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY** ***First 5 California Proud to Help Lead the Effort***

SACRAMENTO, CA -- California was one of only six states to earn an "A" in the Childhood Obesity Report Card issued today by the University of Baltimore Obesity Initiative, an accomplishment due in part to the First 5 California Children and Families Commission's groundbreaking childhood obesity prevention campaign.

"First 5 California has implemented a landmark outreach campaign to fight childhood obesity in young children and prevent future generations from being exposed to serious health problems like Type 2 diabetes," said Kris Perry, executive director of First 5 California. "Our efforts no doubt helped California earn the distinction of being the only state west of the Mississippi to receive an "A" on work done to fight childhood obesity."

One in three children in California are overweight or at risk of being overweight. Overall, Californians are ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of obesity prevalence.

To help address the growing obesity problem, First 5 California partnered with Governor Schwarzenegger and the Health and Human Services Agency last year to launch a cutting edge series of English and Spanish-language television ads aimed at parents of young children, reaching millions of Californians across the state. First 5 California has since built on the campaign with radio, print and billboard components encouraging families to make healthier choices for their children. Locally, First 5 County Commissions are investing in nutrition, fitness and parent education programs that are helping to reverse the obesity trend.

First 5 California also toured the state with its "Hands-on-Health" mobile outreach van, a fun, interactive exhibit that provides families with tips on healthy eating and exercising. The exhibit has reached nearly 95,000 children and parents at local parks, fairs, museums, zoos and other family-friendly events across California, and will reach even more families this spring when First 5 kicks off the third phase of the tour.

Further, the agency is about to launch the first-ever obesity prevention campaign within California targeting the Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant population. First 5 California is proud to lead the way in reaching these communities.

"Receiving an "A" from the University of Baltimore confirms First 5 California is meeting the needs of the state's youngest children by confronting the tough issues head on," said Hector Ramirez, Chair of First 5 California.

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*Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, childcare and other programs for expectant parents and children up to age 5. For more information on First 5 California, visit [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com).*